

The Everlasting South

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Any attempt to present a history of the South as a unit in itself necessarily rests on the assumption that there has been and still is a South.¹ By this is meant not only that the section is separated spatially and climatically from the rest of the United States, but also that it possesses cultural differences worthy of special treatment by the historian. The South, it is assumed, is endowed with enough special characteristics of a political, social, and even psychological nature to make it a distinct province in somewhat the same way that European countries possess distinctiveness.

In what terms shall we explain the great region of the United States that extends from Maryland southward and westward to Texas and Arkansas? Recourse to geographic factors reveals absence of protracted or very severe cold, a summer temperature that ascends to ninety degrees in the shade for fifty afternoons of each year, greater humidity, more sunshine and less wind than elsewhere, torrential rains, and a long growing season that extends to nine months on the Gulf Coast. These "imprints of sun, rain, and wind" have gross as well as subtle influences.² The long hot seasons permitted the creation of the kingdoms of tobacco, rice, sugar, and cotton with all their peculiar characteristics, slowed the tempo of living and of speech, promoted outdoor life, encouraged the employment of Negroes, and made ceilings higher and hallways and porches wider. The torrential rains eroded and leached the soil and helped to explain the poverty.

¹ This paper, which was presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Birmingham on November 1, 1946, is based upon work done by the author in preparing a one-volume history of the South since 1820, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., in the fall of 1947.

² Rupert B. Vance, *Human Geography of the South* (Chapel Hill, 1932), 331.

Yet the South possesses so little unity of topography and of soil that a student of human geography declares: "History, not geography, made the solid South."³ The section is not separated from the rest of the United States by mountain barriers. Instead, a great mountain range and a great river cut it into sections and create plains and valleys that invite unity with northern areas. The region itself is divided into many segments. There are several coastal plains, some facing the Atlantic and some the Gulf; there is the red-soiled Piedmont; there are the Southern Highlands of ridges, valleys, and "a veritable chaos" of high mountains in North Carolina and Tennessee; there are areas of blue grass, black prairies, and clay hills beyond the mountains; the Mississippi with its bluffs, flood plains, bayous, and delta lands; and Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas beyond the great river with their plains, black waxy soils, Ozark Mountains, and semi-deserts.⁴

Efforts to explain the sectional solidarity in terms of economic and cultural forces present difficulties like those of geography. The South never possessed within its own borders a commercial, political, industrial, or intellectual capital, but depended more often than not upon New York or other cities on the outside for leadership in these respects. Moreover, there was nothing in the racial composition of its original white settlers to make them different from other colonial Americans. About the same proportions of English, Scotch-Irish, Germans, and others of different nationalities settled in the southern colonies as in other sections of English America. Professor Ulrich B. Phillips, noting these facts, seeks a definition elsewhere. He strikes at the heart of the matter when he designates white supremacy as "the central theme" of southern history. By this he means that the whites in the presence of large masses of blacks considered it necessary to maintain a superior and unique attitude on race. This was done "in the interest of orderly government and the maintenance of Caucasian civilizations." This attitude, Phillips maintains, is the essence of Southernism. Abolish it and the South would remain a mere geographical segment of the United

³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴ Avery O. Craven, *The Coming of the Civil War* (New York, 1942), 19.

States.⁵ To Phillips' explanation Professor Avery O. Craven adds the prevalence of the country-gentleman ideal. This pattern, Craven explains, was borrowed from the English and justified by the physiocratic philosophy of the French, but it flourished naturally in the South because that section was overwhelmingly agricultural.⁶

John Crowe Ransom explains Southernism in more exalted terms. It is the creation by the men of the Old South of the ideal of a conservative civilization which they wished to preserve. In place of the progressive culture of the North, the southern ambition was to "put the surplus of energy in the free life of the mind," giving scope to the refinements of a settled life in rural comfort.⁷ To these explanations of the regional solidarity it is easy to add others. Among them are the fundamental piety of the southern people, their emphasis on home life, the peculiarities of their food, the survival of rural ways even in growing cities, and a powerful nativism largely untouched by the stream of foreign immigration that has influenced the remainder of the United States within the last hundred years. One may join Professor James G. Randall in suggesting that Southernism is a reality too elusive to be explained in terms of historical origins and conditioning factors. It is something like a song or an emotion. "Poets have done better," remarks Randall, "in expressing the oneness of the South than historians in explaining it."⁸

There is a wealth of factual and interpretative scholarship which has used the sectional differences as a means of describing the South as it was before 1861. Eminent historians of both the sectional and the national institutions make the inevitable contrast between the Old South and the Old North. It is the difference between the lands of the Cavalier and the Puritan, of slavery and freedom, of agriculture and industry, of the planter and the small farmer, and of static content-

⁵ "The Central Theme of Southern History," in Ulrich B. Phillips, *The Course of the South to Secession* (New York, 1939), 152. This article first appeared in the *American Historical Review* (New York, 1895-), XXXIV (1928), 30-43.

⁶ Avery O. Craven, *The Repressible Conflict, 1830-1861* (Baton Rouge, 1939), 14-23.

⁷ John C. Ransom, "The South Defends Its Heritage," in *Harper's Magazine* (New York, 1850-), CLIX (1929), 108-18.

⁸ James G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston, 1937), 3-4.

ment and progressive aspirations. This contrast is often used as the explanation of the coming of the Civil War: the differences in ideals and ambitions were so great that the conflict of arms could not be repressed. The opinion of the scholars was but a confirmation of contemporary belief. One ardent Southerner said in 1856: "The North and the South are two nations, made by their institutions, customs and habits of thought, as distinct as the English and the French; and our annual meetings at Washington are not Congresses to discuss the common interests, but conventions, to contest antagonistic opinions and to proclaim mutual grievances and utter hostile threats."⁹

According to opinion almost as weighty as those expressed above, the Old South of differences and contrasts went down in defeat at Appomattox. In its place was created the New South in which human freedom and political unification were actualities and industrialization and sectional reconciliation were aspirations. Was not the South's central problem after 1865, whether political, industrial, or social, to adjust the sectional standards to those of the victorious North? Have not the most worth-while events in the annals of the section during that time been concerned with adjustments to the demands of northern progress? Have not these adjustments been happy experiences out of which southern leaders and people have gained much?

That there is much truth in these contentions is attested by the fact that during Reconstruction the South recognized the supremacy of the Union, free labor, equality of all men before the law, and representation in legislative bodies according to population; that as the result of Bourbon rule and agrarian revolt the national ideals of business success, industrial advance, and political democracy won victories over the heritage from the Old South; and that the section put into practice the New England-inspired concept of universal education. It can be shown, also, that imported liberal views of the relation of religion and science were accepted by college-bred leaders in the South; that imported class alignments and recreational activities altered social life; that in defer-

⁹ Craven, *The Repressible Conflict*, 28, quoted from *Charleston Mercury* without giving exact date of issue.

ence to the critical standards of New York City the section created a literature that affronted its romantic pride; that despite a painful sensitiveness it allowed the Negro to progress along lines in keeping with northern concepts of uplift; and that with unreserved patriotism Southerners participated in the battles of three national wars and southern statesmen were leaders in the councils of three national administrations. Because of these concessions to northern standards there is indeed some room for the conclusion that the states of the former Confederacy had by the 1930's so far receded from the agrarianism and the sectionalism of 1861 that they were about to become a mere segment of a unitary republic.

To justify this progression out of an unhappy past there arose two groups of publicists. The first group consisted of the champions of the New South movement of the 1880's and the 1890's. The leaders were Henry W. Grady, Walter Hines Page, and Jabez L. M. Curry. Without repudiating the heritage of the past, they demanded progress along lines of industrial development and liberal thinking. The second group were the Southern Liberals who made their views known in the 1920's and the 1930's. Like Grady and his coadjutors, the Southern Liberals tactfully got precedents out of the South's past on which to build a better South for the future. In the name of a liberal tradition said to be inherently Southern, they assaulted the religious orthodoxy, the Puritanism, the demagoguery, the ramshackle dwellings, the rural conservatism, and other undesirable aspects of the contemporary scene. Edwin Mims recalled the anticlerical tradition of the American Revolution as a defense against church authority that sought to stay the teaching of Darwin.¹⁰ George Fort Milton and Robert W. Winston, in their studies of Andrew Johnson, found much that was genuinely Southern in a leader who opposed the Confederacy.¹¹ Broadus Mitchell strengthened the advocacy of industrialism by praising William Gregg,

¹⁰ *The Advancing South* (Garden City, N. Y., 1926).

¹¹ George Fort Milton, *The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (New York, 1930); Robert W. Winston, *Andrew Johnson, Plebeian and Patriot* (New York, 1928).

an ante-bellum cotton manufacturer.¹² Virginus Dabney in a historical study traced southern liberalism to antecedents extending as far back as the eighteenth century, emphasizing Jefferson's fight against an established church, his anti-slavery principles, and his plans for public education.¹³ Clement Eaton found the roots of southern liberalism in the post-Revolutionary planters, contrasting their deism and their devotion to other aspects of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century with the Presbyterian orthodoxy and the pro-slavery agrarianism that are accused of putting out the lights of progress in the 1830's.¹⁴ Despite their professed fealty to the past, the Southern Liberals were modern enough to advocate state action in social and economic fields quite beyond the Jeffersonian conception of an agrarian society in which governmental action was reduced to the minimum. They believed in good roads, libraries, hospitals, school expansion, social legislation, and the other material comforts which the common people in all progressive societies demand of their governments. Some of the Southern Liberals, like the novelists Thomas S. Stribling and Ellen Glasgow, frankly visited satire or plaintive condemnation upon the southern tradition.

The critical historian is tempted to suggest that a major cause of the prestige of the Southern Liberals was that they were in a subconscious conspiracy to make the worse appear the better cause. The investigator is surprised to discover that men like Henry W. Grady and Charles B. Aycock, despite their Yankee-pleasing refulgence, were conservative Southerners, especially in their attitude toward white supremacy. Perhaps a careful investigation would prove the same thing about a later generation of southern liberals. Governor Ellis Arnall is as benevolently non-committal as a Bourbon orator in proclaiming what he wants for the Negroes. He says: "They are a part of the South and their economic welfare is a part of the South's economic welfare. They are entitled to decent housing, decent clothing, good schools, economic

¹² William Gregg, *Factory Master of the Old South* (Chapel Hill, 1928).

¹³ *Liberalism in the South* (Chapel Hill, 1932).

¹⁴ *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (Durham, 1940).

opportunity, and justice.”¹⁵ The Southern Liberals may be too good Southerners to advocate fundamental changes in the southern pattern. Certainly they are wise enough in their Southernism not to wish their section blasted out of its position by the outside world as was done eighty years ago. They wish the South to receive congratulations rather than blows. As a substitute for the frankness of the pro-slavery argument, they use tact and accommodating rhetoric as the southern defense. As constructive patriots they want the benefits of northern progress; as realists they want northern investments and federal and capitalist philanthropies for their poor land. The anti-Talmadge campaign of the summer of 1946 sounded like a movement to make Atlanta into a greater center of northern investments.

The champions of the New South movement were not adequately answered by contemporaries. Little attention was paid to the protests of the anti-Yankee extremists, Albert Taylor Bledsoe and Robert Lewis Dabney: the one protesting in the name of the old chivalry, the other in the name of religious conservatism. Responsible conservatives did not care to breast the liberal tide; more often than not they rendered lip service to it while violating in practice as much of it as suited their convenience. No such evasiveness, however, characterized the reception of the liberalism which came thirty years later. In 1930 a group of twelve, called the Southern Agrarians, published a manifesto against the Southern Liberals.¹⁶ Under the more attractive name of regionalism, these writers reconciled the old sectionalism of unhappy memory with modern needs and found in it much that was good. Granting that the past was unrecoverable in its old forms, they disavowed the progressive outlook as unfit for southern needs and as a betrayal of a worthy and congenial heritage. They defined the true South as rural, conservative, stable, and religious. They defended inherited prejudices against Northerners and against Negro equality, and they had much to say against the modern school and against religion turned into sociology. They believed that the South should revive its agrarian tradition and repudi-

¹⁵ Quoted in *Christian Century* (Chicago, 1884-), LXII, 1202 (October 24, 1945).

¹⁶ *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (New York, 1930).

ate the industrial invasion as unsound economically and deceptive in its humanitarian implications.

Like their opponents, the Southern Agrarians drew precedents out of the past. From Thomas Jefferson they got justification of agrarianism and condemnation of the social welfare state. From John C. Calhoun they got reasons for the protection of the minority states against the numerical majority. Nevertheless, again like their opponents, they saw the necessity of modern adjustments. From Sinclair Lewis, the Minnesota novelist, they learned of the baneful effects of the standardization which mechanization forced upon the sections of the United States and were thankful that this development had not gone as far in the South as elsewhere. They joined in the disillusionment which the First World War forced upon the thoughtful in all sections of the civilized world concerning the benefits of liberal progress. The Southern Agrarians saw no good reasons why their region should decide in favor of liberalism and progress at the time these forces were proving no remedy for the convulsions of civilization in other areas. Instead they saw good reason for reaction into a conservative past as a possible means of escaping such convulsions.

The Southern Agrarians got less attention from their contemporaries than did the Southern Liberals. They were looked upon by many as harmless literary eccentrics. Their essays were not widely read by a southern reading public unwilling to depart from its habit of getting its literary pabulum from New York City. Indeed, not to be read was the logical fate of intellectual ruralism of the southern tradition. Yet these writers had the satisfaction of believing that the conservative South was nearer the actuality than was the progressive South praised by the Southern Liberals. They were penetrating enough in their understandings to know that the national standardization which Sinclair Lewis described had not annihilated the differentials of their beloved section except concerning material things. They knew that even though the modern Southerner joined the Westerner and the Northerner in riding in the same type of automobile, living in the same type of house, and wearing the same type of clothes, he had not necessarily surren-

dered his distinctions of thought and emotions; that reading the same book and attending the same school did not necessarily iron out the provincial thinking. They understood that the conversion of many educated Southerners to the logic of liberalism did not mean that the converts were always willing to put aside inherited habits in order to live according to new logic. They knew, for example, that few of the many who wrote and talked against race prejudice were willing to suffer the inconveniences of violating accepted race separations; that few of those who believed that the cause of liberalism should be promoted by having two political parties were willing to incur the displeasure of their conservative neighbors by joining any other political party than the Democratic.

In our examination of the various phases of the institutional life of the New South there will be a constantly recurring condition: that despite changes which the catastrophe of 1865 made inevitable there were forces which prevented the cultural differences of the province from being destroyed. In politics, to cite the most obvious example, the South responded to the suggestion that it give the Negro the equalities mentioned in the Declaration of Independence by reducing the race to political impotence; and in order to insure the permanence of this result the white voters of the section solidified themselves into one political party from which the right of dissent was largely denied. There were counter currents against the seemingly vast progress away from rural stagnation which industrialization promoted. The people who moved from country to city and factory frequently did not surrender their rural ideals; the southern country conquered the southern city to as great a degree as the city conquered the country; invading northern industrialism adapted itself so well to the southern tradition that a new feudalism was created resembling that which had existed under slavery.

In the field of religion the Southerner remained orthodox, increased his church-going, and showed little inclination to abate the religious separationism based on distinctions of race and class that were characteristically Southern. In respect to the Negro, important concessions

were made to the liberal spirit. However, the South remained adamant in the matter of greatest importance. The bonds of caste, by which the Negro was kept subordinate and underprivileged, were in few respects weakened. In the realm of culture the South made its greatest concessions to the northern spirit. Here, however, procedures and professed objectives did not always register in actual achievements. Universal education in the northern sense was applied to both races, but it was not used as a means of mixing or equalizing the races. Northern-written textbooks gave an anti-southern bias to instruction in history, literature, and speech; but such materials were supplemented by less formal and perhaps more effective indoctrination in local prejudices and ideals which continued to exist over and above the regimentation of the schools. The section accepted northern dictation in literary matters more completely than in other fields; a book, even about the South and by a Southerner, got little attention from Southerners unless published in New York City; no magazine of southern origin was widely read. There is danger, however, of overemphasizing literary materials in measuring the outlook of the South. The section had a way of ignoring its critics and taking to heart only those writings that conformed to its conceits.

The concept of the Everlasting South was assaulted by the forces which during the last ten years have shaken the world from its ancient moorings. The South was threatened with federal legislation designed to upset established standards of criminal justice and of voting. The United States Supreme Court decreed to colored persons the privileges of sitting with whites on busses and of voting in white primaries. The United States Army, in deference to anti-Nazi standards of democracy, issued anti-segregation orders and published a pamphlet proclaiming the biological equality of races. While the most distinguished resident of Warm Springs, Georgia, thundered against the Nuremberg Laws, his wife, at near-by Birmingham, protested against the Jim Crow laws. Wendell Willkie called on Hollywood to abandon its Negro stereotypes; as a consequence film audiences were introduced to great Negro talents and to a Virginia scene in which a Negro law student was in close associa-

tion with a white family. Most radical of all, the President of the United States, on June 25, 1941, issued what a Negro journalist called "probably the most revolutionary bit of legislation yet passed in America."¹⁷ It was the Fair Employment Practice order which stipulated "that there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin." When a great patriotic organization refused the use of its hall to a famous Negro singer, there was a great outpouring of high officials to hear the banned artist perform from the porch of a public monument. A government that was waging a desperate war against a European nation whose chief offense was the proscription of a supposedly inferior race tried to discourage similar practices among its own citizens.

What happened because of this assault on the southern heritage? The answer is, next to nothing. A liberal Atlanta journalist, in advocating obedience to the suffrage decrees of the Supreme Court, used as his principal argument the assertion that nothing would happen. "There have been," he declared in December, 1945, "no racial upsets in Louisiana and Texas since their Democratic primaries were adjusted to the Supreme Court's ruling. There have been no disturbances or perils to the established social order in Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina, where duly qualified Negro voters have long been admitted to the Democratic primaries."¹⁸ Gunnar Myrdal tells us that the repeal of the poll tax requirement for voting in Louisiana resulted in the registration of only two thousand Negro voters.¹⁹ The sum total of Negro triumphs in southern politics by 1946 was one member of the Kentucky legislature. When in 1942 a Negro announced for Congress in Mississippi against a veteran Democrat, the Negro was promptly run out of the state. Another liberal journalist has expressed the opinion that if this Negro had remained in the contest "lethal and devastating

¹⁷ Arthur P. Davis, "The Negro Student in World Revolution," in *Journal of Negro Education* (Washington, 1932-), XII (1943), 12.

¹⁸ Cited in *Christian Century*, LXII, 1389 (December 14, 1945).

¹⁹ *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, 2 vols. (New York, 1944), I, 482.

clashes would have been probable.”²⁰ The disapproval of the southern one-eighth of the American movie-going public prevented the film industry from making more than timid gestures in the direction of revising the traditional conception of the Negro.

The South was ever on guard against the tricks that federal officials and northern Negro leaders were said to be planning. Its demagogues circulated tales about interracial “blood banks,” rape, interracial education, and communist plans for mongrelization. Its young men, in soldiers’ and sailors’ uniforms, could at a moment’s notice be mobilized in any center of population to impose the racial discipline with a zeal not unlike that with which they were trained to subdue a colored people of the Orient. Its older citizens, without the thought of anything so old-fashioned as mob violence or of anything so new-fashioned as asking for Negro participation, organized extensive Home Guard units to put down disorders, racial or otherwise. The radical Fair Employment Practice order was only generally enforced to give the Negroes positions created by the war and for which it was not possible or convenient to employ white men. It was beyond the southern imagination to believe that the President assumed that clerical or managerial positions should be opened to Negroes living in the South.

The end of the Second World War witnessed a renewal of southern vigilance. The fear of the acts of Negro ex-soldiers with the “Deep-Are-the-Roots” philosophy brought the threat of a third Ku Klux Klan. Southern congressmen, early in 1946, successfully prevented the enactment into permanent statute of Roosevelt’s Fair Employment policy. They did this with a near unanimity comparable to that with which their predecessors fifty-six years earlier opposed federal intervention in elections. There proved to be a Solid South in economic matters like there was already a Solid South in matters political. In the following summer Southernism began to be reasserted in a more dramatic form. The re-election of Eugene Talmadge as governor of Georgia and the lynching of four Georgia Negroes seemed to force the northern friends of southern liberalism to abandon their long-expressed hope that the

²⁰ Virginius Dabney, “Nearer and Nearer the Precipice,” in *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston, 1857-), CLXXI (1943), 96.

South would change. When they cynically set about creating the myth that Georgia was a hoodlum state, the Southern Liberals retaliated by crying out against the wisdom of "outside interference." The Negroes, despite rumors and the fiery utterances of the black press, were acquiescent. There was nothing they could do. Roosevelt was dead and a Missouri moderate was in the White House. Perhaps there was nothing they wanted to do. Robert S. Cotterill's assertion about their unanimous loyalty to the South in the great crisis of the 1860's²¹ may also apply to the lesser crisis of the 1940's. They can be regarded as genuine Southerners, as much in love with the land of their ancestors as any southern white aristocrat, yeoman farmer, or poor white. They can be seen returning South for the Virginia "sittings-in." They are as disinclined to sit by white people on busses as they are to enter such public carriers with their trousers off. The Negroes respect established conventions as readily as do white people. If the whites would allow them to have a free ballot, the Negroes would vote about as the whites; some of them might even have voted for Eugene Talmadge, just as some would have voted for Cole L. Blease twenty years ago when South Carolina was confronted with the menace of another demagogue.

The modern Southerner shared in the great patriotic emotions which from time to time gripped Americans. He accepted without reluctance material benefits proffered by the federal government and northern industrialists; and he was as willing as other Americans to make sacrifices for his country—even the supreme sacrifice on the battlefield. Yet he also cherished sectional prejudices and loyalties. Often the most jingoistic American turned out to be a Southerner with the strongest anti-Yankee feeling. In one breath such a person ascribed all manner of evil to his country's enemies and in the next breath uttered imprecations almost as devastating against fellow Americans who were not Southerners; in his more ignorant moments it was possible for him to confuse the much belabored Yankee with the Spaniard, the German, the Japanese, or other victims of the national wrath. He could, as he did during the presidential canvass of 1928, reconcile sectional preju-

²¹ *The Old South* (Glendale, Calif., 1936), 317.

dices with national prejudices, using, for example, the southern predilection against Negroes, the city-bred, the liquor drinkers, and the non-Protestants to support nationalistic feelings against the alien morals and customs of immigrant-influenced northern cities.

This contradiction between sectionalism and nationalism is partly understood by the realization that it is more apparent than real. The Southerner was more often able to identify sectional with national feelings. Moreover, despite his self-conscious provincialism, he possessed more cultural traits in common with the Northerner than with any other inhabitant of the earth. The South after the fall of the Confederacy was in no sense a nation. It lacked independence in origin, language, industrial life, and culture which makes a people willing and able to stand alone. It was only a section, without being willing or able to support a recurrence of the patriotism which brought on the tragedy of 1861. Knowing that the surrender of Lee destroyed its national ambitions beyond recovery, the South was able to make a wise distinction between patriotic and sectional emotions. Thus was produced a practical harmony between two loyalties not unlike that which Americans as a whole have learned to develop between church and state.

The South supplemented its acceptance of many of the ideas of the victors of 1865 by imposing some of its ideas upon the North. In a limited but real sense this was another example of Greece conquering her Roman conqueror. The failure of Reconstruction conferred two distinct victories upon the previously defeated section: first, recognition by the nation that the members of the Union possessed certain inviolate rights; second, the adoption by the nation of many phases of the southern attitude toward the Negro. This yielding on race proceeded at such a pace that it soon became debatable which section accorded the Negro fewer privileges. Because of its pronounced conservatism and its comparative isolation from contact with foreigners and foreign ideas, the South was able to contribute much to the reactionary nationalism that influenced the United States in the twentieth century. The prejudices of its native multitudes gave unadulterated strength to restrictive immigration laws; its pure Anglo-Saxon racial and political ideals were

rallying points for the unification of a nation of diverse origins; its Protestantism and its Puritanism gave shape and strength to the peculiarities of the national religion and morals. A symbol of this strident nationalism was the second Ku Klux Klan, an organization southern in origin and in ideals but national in influence. A more attractive symbol of aggressive Southernism was the Robert E. Lee cult, the embodiment of the best in the sectional tradition. Lee was accepted as a hero in the North in as true a sense as Abraham Lincoln was accepted in the South.

The twentieth century witnessed increasing tolerance of southern viewpoints in northern thinking. This was clearly illustrated by the trend in historical scholarship. Charles A. Beard, leading chronicler of the national annals, shifted the explanation of the great sectional struggle from moralistic conceits about slavery and secession to economic factors concerned as much with the overweening ambitions of Yankee plutocrats as with those of southern planters. William A. Dunning and James G. Randall gave coldly convincing justifications of the section's contentions concerning war and Reconstruction. For the masses of the North there was created the cult of the Old South, a belief evolved out of romance and emotion. Its greatest triumph was the northern reception of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* (1936), a glorification of southern plantation life that captured the imagination of the national reading public as no other twentieth century book has done. The work of historians and novelists was supplemented by the instruction which thousands and even millions of Northerners got from visits to the monuments of the Old South. With gaping curiosity these visitors looked upon the mellow beauty of Old Charleston, Old New Orleans, Old Natchez, Old Richmond, and Old Virginia. They were instructed by native guides with an effectiveness greater than that of the Yankee schoolteachers who came South during Reconstruction. Indeed it is interesting to speculate whether, in the struggle to capture the national imagination, the victory will lie with the South or with the North. One may even be attentive to the interesting prediction made by Count Hermann Keyserling in 1929 that when the

American nation finds itself culturally, "the hegemony will inevitably pass over to the South. There alone can there be a question of enduring culture." The region below the Potomac possesses the type which "was truly responsible for America's greatness in the past. That is the type of the Southern gentleman, with the corresponding type of woman. For these are the only types of 'complete souls' that the United States has as yet produced."²²

²² Hermann Keyserling, "The South—America's Hope," in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXLIV (1929), 607-608.